

to Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania; Deputy Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Don Eberly, chairman and founder, Acting Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Wade F. Horn, president, and Roland Warren, executive vice president, National Fatherhood Initiative; Josh McDowell, founder, Josh McDowell Ministries; and former Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks Honoring the 2001 Super Bowl Champion Baltimore Ravens

June 7, 2001

Thank you. Please be seated. It seems like we drew quite a crowd here today. It's been a big day here at the White House. I got to sign the most significant tax relief in a generation, recycling a few tax families here. *[Laughter]* Then, of course, I get the high honor of welcoming the Super Bowl champs, the Baltimore Ravens.

First, I do want to thank the Members of the United States Congress from the State of Maryland who are here. It seems like they have got a particular interest in this event. Thank you all for coming. Cardinal, thank you for being here, as well. With you on the side of the Ravens, I can now understand why teams like the Cowboys didn't do very well.

Art, welcome, and congratulations. Some of you may know, or don't know, I used to be an owner in the professional leagues. It happened to be in baseball. I never had the thrill of receiving a trophy like you and your family have done. It's a great tribute to good ownership, to win a trophy such as this. And I congratulate you for being here. And I congratulate you for putting together a fine organization. Big Ozzie, congratulations, sir. I'm your age. *[Laughter]* You look younger. *[Laughter]*

I also want to congratulate the coach. Brian, it's good to see you again. I think the players know this, that you can't win a championship without a good coach, without a good leader. And it's pretty hard to inspire a group of strong-headed, great athletes—*[laughter]*—but you did. I congratulate you.

I want to congratulate all the players who are here. And I want to congratulate your families, too. It's sometimes not easy to be

the wife of a football player or a baseball player. There's a lot of time away from the home. And while the players, of course, deserve the great credit for winning on the field, the wives deserve a lot of credit, too, by standing behind the players. So congratulate to the family members.

This is a team that is blessed by five native—having five native Texans on the team. *[Laughter]* Very wise of you. *[Laughter]* So to my fellow Texans, welcome to the White House, it's good to see you. *[Laughter]*

A couple of points I want to make. First, I realize it's been 30 years since the Lombardi Trophy rested in Baltimore, Maryland. It's clear by bringing it back home, Art, that you have indelibly etched your team and your style and the team's culture in the hearts of the people of Baltimore.

I also want to use this opportunity—as you know, I'm going over to Europe, and one of the discussions there in Europe will be about defense—*[laughter]*—Senator Sarbanes. *[Laughter]* I think our Allies need to look at the Baltimore Ravens. *[Laughter]* They'll realize good defense wins. A good defense is one which adjusts to the times. A good defense is modern. A good defense is clear. And if Secretary Rumsfeld gets tired of his job, Secretary Marvin Lewis sounds pretty good—*[laughter]*—Secretary of Defense. *[Laughter]*

At any rate, congratulations for winning. I also want to congratulate Michael McCrory. I do, because he recently received the NFL Player's Association highest honor of humanitarian achievement. That's important. It's important to be a champ on the field, and it's important to be a champ off the field. And Michael, I want to thank you for your work with the Special Olympics.

I don't know if any of you have ever had a chance to go to see the Special Olympics, but if you do, and somebody offers you a chance to be a hugger—which means you're standing on the other side of the finish line to hug somebody who comes running across—do it. It touches your heart. And Michael, thank you for that. And thank you for setting a good example.

Thank you all for coming to the White House. Thanks for being champs. And on behalf of the American people, I congratulate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to His Eminence William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore; and owner Art Modell, vice president of player personnel Ozzie Newsome, head coach Brian Billick, defensive coordinator Marvin Lewis, and defensive end Michael McCrary, Baltimore Ravens.

Proclamation 7448—Asiatic Fleet Memorial Day

June 7, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

All of America's service personnel and veterans deserve our gratitude, and it is fitting to pay tribute to the United States Asiatic Fleet.

The United States Navy's presence in the Far East dates to 1822. The Asiatic Fleet was formed in 1902, reestablished in 1910, and continued to serve into 1942. Through years of unrest and disturbance, the Fleet protected American lives and interests along the China coast and the Yangtze River, bearing responsibilities that were as much diplomatic as Naval. The Fleet also assisted civilian areas devastated by the forces of nature and by internal warfare.

When the attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into World War II, the Asiatic Fleet played a key role in the defense of the Philippines. Outnumbered and outgunned at sea and in the air, the Fleet was joined by ships of the British, Dutch, and Australian navies to oppose the Japanese advance through what is now Indonesia. The Fleet's destroyers hit the Japanese at Balikpapan and Badung Strait, and the cruiser *Marblehead* fought her way through massive air attacks off Bali while submarines, short of fuel and torpedoes, struck Japanese supply lines.

The battle for the "Malay Barrier" reached its climax in the Java Sea. In the opening

hours of March 1, 1942, the American cruiser *Houston* and the Australian cruiser *Perth*, outnumbered and outgunned by the Japanese, fought to the last in the Sunda Strait. They went down with their guns still firing and were followed hours later by the British cruiser *Exeter*. The remaining Allied ships were then ordered to make their way to Australia.

The Asiatic Fleet was no more, but its heritage of courage and selfless dedication helped spur our Navy to victory in World War II. Since then, the Seventh Fleet has carried on the Asiatic Fleet's duties, earning honor in Korea and Vietnam and helping to preserve peace and stability in East Asia. The men and women of our Naval services who saw the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion and won victory in Operation Desert Storm are worthy descendants of the sailors and Marines who earned glory in the Java Sea. As we pay tribute to the memory of the Asiatic Fleet, I call on all Americans to join me in saluting its proud heritage of bravery and honor.

The Congress, by Public Law 105–261, on October 17, 1998, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in commemoration of the United States Navy Asiatic Fleet.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Friday, March 1, 2002, as U.S. Navy Asiatic Fleet Memorial Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 11.